

Written responses to questions regarding:  
The Downtowns of Promise RFP

**1. Please explain the expected deliverables as noted in II A (e)**

Answer: The process to derive the plan should be inclusive and the plan should include (but not be limited to) the items listed in II A (e).

**2. What is the role of the Michigan Municipal League (MML) in the selection process and the plan development process?**

Answer: The MML will serve on the scoring panel during the selection process, and then also serve as a resource to the selected contractor to connect to League services that might be needed to implement relevant parts of the finished plan.

**3. Is the City of Detroit one of the communities?**

Answer: A traditional commercial neighborhood within the City of Detroit has applied (Not downtown.)

**4. Are there a maximum number of business districts for which a community may seek a revitalization plan?**

Answer: Communities were asked to submit one (1) application that focused on either their traditional commercial district or a neighborhood commercial district.

**5. Are there a maximum number of business districts for which a community may seek a revitalization plan?**

Answer: Communities were asked to choose one district within their community to focus on.

**6. What is your available budget for this effort?**

Answer: The budget has been set at \$450,000 total.

**7. On page 8, subparagraph II, B, b, indicates that an orientation meeting must be held in “up to six communities” and in subparagraph II, B, c, it indicates that market analyses must be prepared for “up to six communities.” Is it safe to assume that in both instances, these will be the same six communities or could orientation meetings be held in one set of communities while market analyses would be held in another?**

Answer: Yes, it will be the same six communities that will receive an orientation meeting along with the market analyses.

8. **Related to #1, on page 7, the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph references “all 8 plans”. Is this a typo and only 6 plans are anticipated? Also, is the final plan product to be produced applicable to the same communities where the orientation meetings and market analyses will be prepared, or could some or all of them be different communities?**

Answer: Yes, it was a typo and it is anticipated to only be 6 communities. It will be the same communities.

9. **On page 9, subparagraph g, lists seven activities that will assist the contractor. It appears that the communities are responsible for completing these activities. Have the communities already undertaken this work? Will the contractor be expected to assist in any of these activities? If so, what will be the contractors’ responsibilities? Will the contractors be held accountable for work in a community that has failed to satisfactorily perform these activities?**

Answer: The communities will gather this information as part of the plan formulation. The selected contractor will be expected to advise the communities on how and where to collect data, but not gather the described data firsthand. If there is an issue with a lack of performance in the data gathering area on behalf of the community, it will not reflect negatively on the contractor.

10. **On page 11, subparagraph B seeks information on the type of business organization. It is likely that MSHDA will receive proposals from teams of consulting firms, since the required skills to complete the effort are normally not found in one company. However, the form of the proposal assumes a single entity. Will MSHDA consider a proposal submitted by two or more firms working in professional association?**

Answer: Yes

11. **Page 13, section 5, seeks information on “rates” and a line item budget which amounts to a not-to-exceed fee. Most consultants will be able to quote hourly billing rates for professional staff and unit**

costs for expenses, such as printing, mileage and per diem. However, establishing a line item budget with a not-to-exceed total is problematic when the location of the communities is not known. For example, a consulting firm can more economically serve a community that is near its local office than a community that requires overnight travel. Is there any information about the communities to be served that would allow the responding consultants to determine these costs? If not, would MSHDA accept a proposal that merely quotes rates of reimbursement for such items as mileage, meals and overnight, without quoting a fixed fee?

Answer: The eight Cities of Promise are Detroit, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Pontiac, Flint, Saginaw, Benton Harbor and Muskegon Heights. Six of the eight Cities of Promise have applied to be a part of the program. ***Bidders must not contact these communities. Should any of these cities be contacted about this opportunity, the bidder will be disqualified.***

12. **The RFP specifically mentions that the selected consultant is to hold an orientation meeting for up to 6 communities. Is it anticipated that this would be one meeting, held in a central location, which representatives from up to six communities attend? Or is it anticipated that up to 6 separate orientation meetings be held, likely in each community.**

Answer: It is anticipated that the orientation session would be held at MSHDA with all 6 communities.

13. **Are only Michigan Main Street communities eligible for the program, or will non-Main Street cities also be eligible?**

Answer: The communities will be non-Main Street cities.

14. **Will Michigan Main Street Center staff, and/or MSHDA staff, be available as a resource for the consultant throughout the project, on a limited basis.**

Answer: Staff from MSHDA will be involved with the process.

15. **The 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph on page 7 of the RFP mentions 8 plans? Should this read 6 plans?**

Answer: Yes it should read 6 plans.

- 16. The RFP suggests February 2010 as a start-date for the project, but does not indicate a desired completion date. Is there an established deadline for when the studies are to be completed?**

Answer: The studies should be completed by December 31, 2010.

- 17. There are now eight Cities of Promise as noted on the MSHDA web site: Benton Harbor, Detroit, Flint, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Muskegon Heights, Pontiac, and Saginaw. Which six will be chosen to participate? What are the election criteria to participate in the Downtowns of Promise project?**

Answer: Six communities have applied to MSHDA to be part of the program. All six have been approved to move forward.

- 18. For the selected communities, are there already existing nonprofit downtown organizations (such as Chambers, merchant associations, Main Street organizations, local economic development organizations, LISC, DDAs, others?) that are already working in each community or commercial corridor? If so, how effective are these organizations?**

Answer: The selected districts have committed to creating a process committee which would enlist the assistance of several key groups in their community (specific groups vary).

- 19. If there is no already organized group, then is part of the Downtowns of Promise project to gather likely stakeholders together to form a nonprofit group to help implement the action plan? Is it expected that these communities might apply to become official Michigan Main Street communities in the future?**

Answer: See answer above. All five of the six districts that have applied are eligible to become Michigan Main Street communities in the future, but is not required for participation in the Downtowns of Promise program.

- 20. How involved are local elected officials in the Cities of Promise projects? What is their expected role in the Downtowns of Promise effort? Have local elected officials been the main drivers of the Downtowns of Promise effort in their community?**

Answer: The Downtowns of Promise process will include city staff. The extent and degree of city staff's involvement will vary by community.

- 21. Will MSHDA provide mailing/email lists of stakeholders in each community for the contractor to contact to organize meetings or will**

**MSHDA be the meeting convener in consultation with the willing contractor?**

Answer: MSHDA will convene the orientation meeting with the selected contractor. Subsequent meetings will be arranged by the contractor and participating communities in consultation with MSHDA staff.

**22. How many meetings are required outside of the orientation meeting?**

Answer: The number of meetings should be determined by the contractor in their proposal.

**23. Can the list of stakeholders be expanded/reformed during the course of the project?**

Answer: Yes.

**24. Can the consultant select the type of public engagement in consultation with MSHDA, such as surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a mixture of these? Which method would MSHDA prefer?**

Answer: Yes. MSHDA does not necessarily have specific methodology or process in mind, only that in be inclusive. Proposals should specify what methodology or process the bidder will use.

**25. What is the role of certain other entities? LISC is noted as active in one community; Pontiac is a Main Street Oakland County town. How do these 2 entities fit into the Downtown of Promise project work in certain communities?**

Answer: Pontiac is not participating in this program. Other groups, such as LISC, may be involved in a community's process committee. Which organizations will be involved will vary by community.

**26. Who will prepare the seven items noted on page 9 of the Exhibit A? Will they be available to the contractor at the start of work? What is the "strategic study" mentioned on Page 9, item 5?**

Answer: These items were the primary basis of the application for the Downtowns of Promise. MSHDA will provide the selected contractor these items prior to start of work.

**27. How much emphasis is being placed on nearby residential neighborhoods? It's mentioned a couple of times. What type of market assessment is desired, assuming greater emphasis?**

Answer: The downtowns and/or traditional commercial neighborhoods should be interfacing and, to a degree, be dependant on the surrounding neighborhoods. The assessment should primarily focus on the downtown/traditional commercial neighborhood, but also consider the surrounding neighborhoods.

**28. What is the role of the Michigan Municipal League in ongoing project management?**

Answer: MSHDA will be the project manager. The Michigan Municipal League will provide resources to the communities, as appropriate, in accordance with the plan.

**29. Job creation is noted in Exhibit A: Given the emphasis on markets, what kind/type of job creation is envisioned over the 3-5 year horizon?**

Answer: Job creation numbers will vary by communities.

**30. Are consumer and/or other types of survey instruments considered an important component of the process for each community? If so, can the eight Cities of Promise noted on the website publicize, circulate and obtain the statistically valid numbers of responses (380) for any surveys needed for market analysis purposes? Can they circulate it to large numbers electronically?**

Answer: This program is covering the six districts that were submitted, not the eight in your question. Yes, they are capable.

**31. Public and private infrastructure recommendations are noted as one possible outcome. How detailed would these need to be given the Scope/RFP emphasis on market analysis?**

Answer: All recommendations should be based in market reality. To that extent, some level of detail beyond “make infrastructure improvements” would be highly recommended.

**32. The web site makes not of successful projects completed in each of the eight Cities of Promise shown. Is the objective to help each community develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to their revitalization work over the next 3-5 years? Should there a long-term component be included in any Action Plans?**

Answer: Questions should be limited to questions bidders have on the RFP. The RFP details the expectations of the Downtowns of Promise program.

- 33. How should the 3-5 year financial standing and capacity of each individual community be addressed in the Action Plans?**

Answer: Yes.

- 34. How will the Cities of Promise measure success/outcomes for the selected communities?**

Answer: The Downtowns of Promise program will measure the success of the program in two ways: 1) A market-based revitalization strategy developed with the community engaged in the process & 2) How well the community can execute the strategy will be determined through the reporting process they are committing to.

- 35. Who will be the project manager for this project at MSHDA?**

Answer: Laura Krizov, Manager, Michigan Main Street Center @ MSHDA

- 36. Will there be a separate budget for travel? Will the need for travel put out of state consultants authorized to do business in MI at a competitive disadvantage in evaluations proposals?**

Answer: Bids should be all inclusive of all anticipated costs. Bids will be evaluated using the scoring criteria provided in the RFP.

- 37. What is the intended project completion date? One Year? 18 months?**

Answer: The contract is expected to be completed by December 31, 2010.

- 38. Will the contractor be expected to pay for mailings, meeting space and/or catering costs for stakeholder meetings?**

Answer: That will depend on what costs the bidder chooses to include in their bid and what costs they expect the community to bear. If a bidder is expecting the community to bear any such cost, it would be advised to make clear in your proposal.

- 39. What is the total amount of federal funds that are available for this project? Is that the sole source of funding for this project? Do the federal funds have to be expended by a particular date?**

Answer: A vast majority of the project will be paid for with non-federal funds. Several communities are using some of their Community Development Block Grant funds to pay the required 10% match.

- 40. Since the project is for up to 6 communities, do you wish proposals based on a per community price?**

Answer: Lump sum and individual price would be appreciated.

- 41. Will this project have a steering committee at the state level?**

Answer: No. Guidance on the program will be given by MSHDA's Specialized Technical Assistance & Revitalization Strategy Division in consultation with MSHDA's Urban Revitalization Division.

- 42. Would MSHDC permit monthly billing?**

Answer: Billing is negotiable.

- 43. What is the Michigan Municipal League's role in the consultant selection process?**

Answer: The Michigan Municipal League will assist in the scoring process of submitted proposals

- 44. Please confirm how many communities will be involved. In Exhibit A, 8 plans are noted in the second to the last paragraph. (p. 7 in A). In other places, 6 towns are noted. How many communities will participate?**

Answer: Six (6) downtown/traditional commercial districts. The eight was a typo.